

March 1st, 1918

Growth in Specialised Arms

STATISTICAL TABLE (,000)

ARM OR BRANCH	AUG 14	MARCH 1918
(1) Cavalry	46	89
(2) Arty (Light)	58,7	339
(3) Arty (Heavy)	27	194
(4) Royal Engineers	24	304
(5) Foot Guardd & Infantry	306	1,750
(6) Cyclist	0	20
(7) Machine Guns		100
(8) Tanks		20
(9) Royal Flying Corps	1,2	144
(10) RA Service Corps	14	318
(11) RA Medical Corps	17,8	142
(12) Ordnance, Vehicles, APC	3,5	79
(13) Labour Columns		348
(14) <u>Non Combatant C</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,2</u>
(15) TOTAL	498.2	3,850,2

Growth of Arms and Branches in the BEF

By March 1918, it is evident that the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) has evolved considerably in its composition.

It has grown in size, but it has also multiplied in support arms, in combat services, and in mechanical warfare.

If the infantry has multiplied by 5.7 times since 1914, the Medical Corps is 8 times as large, the RFC is 120 times as large, Light

Artillery is 57 times as large, and Heavy Artillery 7.1.

The BEF has also acquired 348,000 men in the labour units, dedicated to do rear echelon improvements in non-specialized construction. None of the 100,000 machine-gunners were employed as such at the beginning of the war, and 20,000 soldiers are now in the Tank Corps, which did not exist. Royal Engineers went from 24,000 to 304,000, a near 1300 % increase.

The Canadian Corps is involved in this growth. Currie is at the forefront of such developments.

●War Office, Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire During the Great War, 1914-1920 (The London Stamp Exchange, March 1922).



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March 2nd, 1918

A Compelling Argument in Ukraine



Germans roll in into the Ukraine

The Central Powers made a Treaty of Peace at Brest Litovsk with the Ukraine, on 9 February. The treaty recognized Ukraine's independence and sovereignty. However, the treaty also established Ukraine as a Protectorate of Germany.

On 18 February, the Central Powers renewed their advance into Russia, jumping forward to force Russia to sign a Treaty of Peace, and to seize, as fast as possible, all the border Russian provinces that had been convinced to ask for help against the Bolsheviks.

On 2 March 1918, the advance of the Germans and Austrian-Hungarian forces reaches Kiev, at the heart of Ukraine.

By the provisions of the Peace Treaty, Ukraine, as Protectorate of Germany, is forced

to provide resources to the Germans for their war effort. Grains and minerals will be seized and sent to the west to revive German war industries.

This is compelling for Trotsky, in Brest Litovsk, who will not sign a Treaty of Peace with the Central Powers that leaves him with only a Rump Russia, with all of the border provinces gone.

— But the loss of Ukraine, and the transfer of its wealth to the Germans on this scale, will push pen to paper.

Source: <http://www.dcstamps.com/crimea-german-occupation-ww1-1918/>



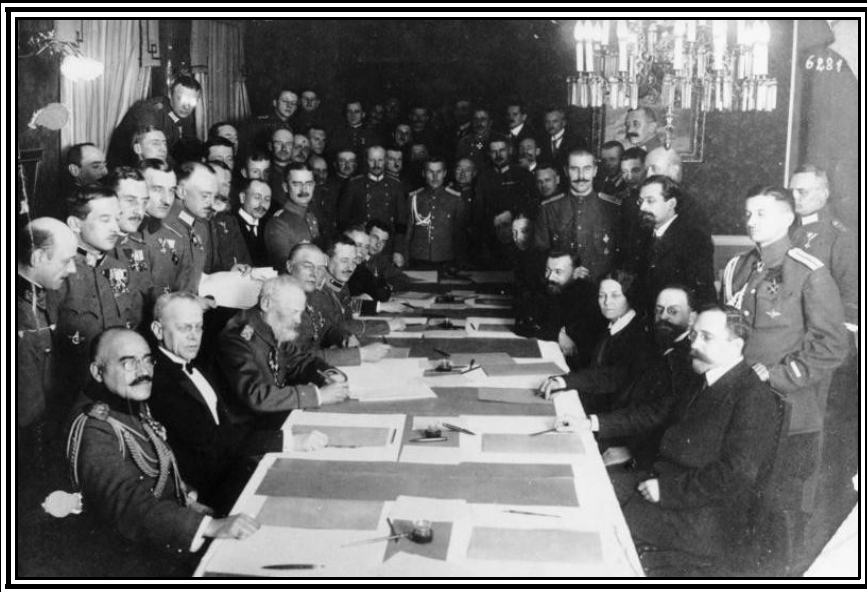
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Le 3 mars, 1918

Une Victoire Vorace



Ratification du Traité de Brest Litovsk

Le 3 mars 1918, les Bolshéviques russes et les puissances du Centre ratifient enfin le traité de Brest Litovsk après de longs pourparlers.

Les clauses du traité sont carrément draconiennes pour l'ancien empire des Tsars; entre autres la Russie se voit amputée de 90% de sa production de charbon, 50% de ses industries, puis 30% de sa population.

Aussitôt l'encre apposée sur le document, les richesses sont divisées entre les Empires centraux: l'énorme

quantité de grain de l'Ukraine est tranchée à 30% pour l'Allemagne, 50% à l'Autriche-Hongrie, et enfin 20% aux Ottomans.

Étant donnée la situation alimentaire critique de l'Autriche-Hongrie, l'Empereur Charles ordonne une saisie agressive du grain ukrainien dû à son empire. La collecte de la denrée doit se faire le plus rapidement possible, sans délai. Les soldats austro-hongrois ont pour instruction d'utiliser la force et les exécutions sommaires, si besoin est, pour faire coopérer les paysans ukrainiens affichant de la récalcitrance.

— En somme, aller, saisir, et acheminer, coûte que coûte, dans une victoire vorace.

●Prit Buttar, The Splintered Empires: The Eastern Front 1917-1921, (2017), p. 270-271. ●Wikipedia, «Traité de Brest-Litovsk».



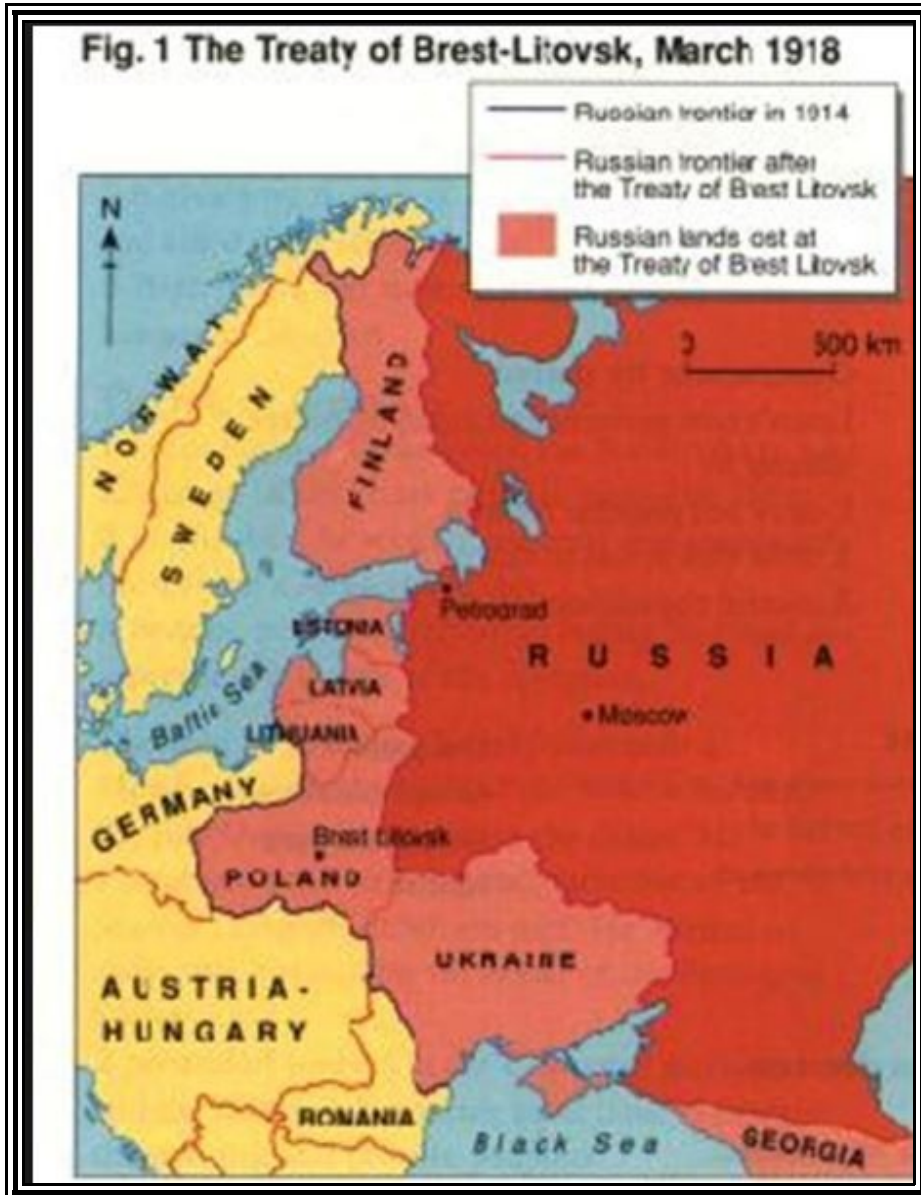
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March 4, 1918

Unprecedented Humiliation



The aftermath of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk

The Treaty of Brest Litovsk signed yesterday between the Central Powers and Russia was termed a «**humiliation without precedent or equal in modern history.**»¹

«It deprived Russia of a territory nearly as large as Austria-Hungary and Turkey combined, with 56,000,000 inhabitants, or 32 per cent of her whole population; a third of her railway mileage, 73 percent of her total iron ore, 89 per cent of her total coal production; and more than 5,000 factories and industrial plants. Moreover, Russia was obliged to pay Germany an indemnity of six billion marks.»²

¹ ●Wheeler-Bennett, *Wooden Titan: Hindenburg*, p. 207-8, quoted in Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 57.

² ●Shirer, *Ibid*, p. 57. ●Map from <http://slideplayer.com/slide/5945374/>



March 5, 1918

Keep the Guns Coming



Success for Churchill in Munitions

The Ministry of Munitions was established in 1915 after the Shell Crisis of that year.

Under Lloyd George, the Ministry quickly became the largest buyer, seller and employer in Britain, harnessing over twenty

thousand factories and 3 million workers, including many women.

By 1917, Churchill's reputation had largely recovered from the Dardanelles defeat. Seeking a new level of efficiency, PM Lloyd George brought Churchill back into government as Minister of Munitions, in July 1917.

Churchill re-organized the Ministry and rewarded the work force with a large increase in wages and often intervened on workers' behalf with employers. Churchill said:

"We cannot win this war unless we are supported by the great labouring classes of this country."

By 1918, munitions and weapons were in ample supply and Churchill had expanded production of the new technologies of war: aeroplanes, gas, tanks and machine-guns.

On 5 March 1918, Winston presents his plan for the production of armament for the year 1919.

Further information: ●Roy Jenkins, Churchill, (2001). ●Churchill, World Crisis, III (2), 394-403.



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March 6, 1918

Haig's Ultimate No



The Showdown on the Allied reserve

On February 25th, both General Rawlinson, who is now the British Representative on the Military Committee of the Supreme War Council in Versailles, and General Henry Wilson, the British CIGS in London, met Haig at his Headquarters in France.

The purpose of the visit was to convince Haig that the Supreme War Council's plan for a strategic reserve should be supported.

The plan is for a large 30-division reserve (10 British, 13 French

and 7 Italian) to be maintained in the rear and used as a massive counter-force to any successful German assault against either the British or the French line.

But Haig is again opposed to the plan. His BEF has recently had to spread out to take more of the defensive front line, and he has only 6 divisions for his own reserve.

Once again, he maintains his position that the arrangements that he has made with Pétain, that they would help each other in case of need, remains his ultimate plan.

The Prime Minister is informed on **5 March 1918** that Haig will, again, not move.

— Lloyd George's Memoirs are full of resentment against that fateful decision.

•Sheffield & Bourne (Eds), Haig, p. 384-5; •Lloyd George, Memoirs, V: p. 2860-70.



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Le 7 mars, 1918

Un Parti désormais Communiste

Le VIIe Congrès du Parti Bolchévique



Immédiatement après la signature du Traité de Brest Litovsk, le Parti Bolshévique se réunit en session extraordinaire du Congrès du Parti à Pétrograd pour le ratifier.

Les délégués sont informés secrètement que la Russie y renonce aux territoires de la Pologne, de la Lituanie et de la Courlande. Les armées russes devront évacuer la Livonie et l'Estonie. Enfin le gouvernement russe devra reconnaître l'indépendance de l'Ukraine et de la Finlande.

Lénine doit faire face à une opposition 'communiste' gauchiste menée par Nicholay Bukharin, alors que peu de délégués peuvent se rendre à temps pour le vote.

Lenin réussit à faire les compromis nécessaires pour faire approuver sa résolution Guerre et Paix par un vote avec signature de 30 en faveur, 12 contre, et 4 abstentions.

À partir de ce moment, le Parti Bolshévique devient le Parti Communiste.

La Résolution de Lénine ainsi adoptée dans ce Septième Congrès (extraordinaire) du Parti sera entérinée par le Quatrième Congrès des Soviets de Russie, du 14 au 16 mars 1918.

À partir de ce moment, le Parti Communiste se concentrera sur les politiques internes de sorte à reconstruire une Russie post-Brest Litovsk.

●Grousset, et Léonard, dir., Histoire Universelle, Tome III – De la Réforme à nos Jours, Encyclopédie de la Pléiade (Gallimard, 1958), p. 908-10. ●Wikipedia, «7th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)»



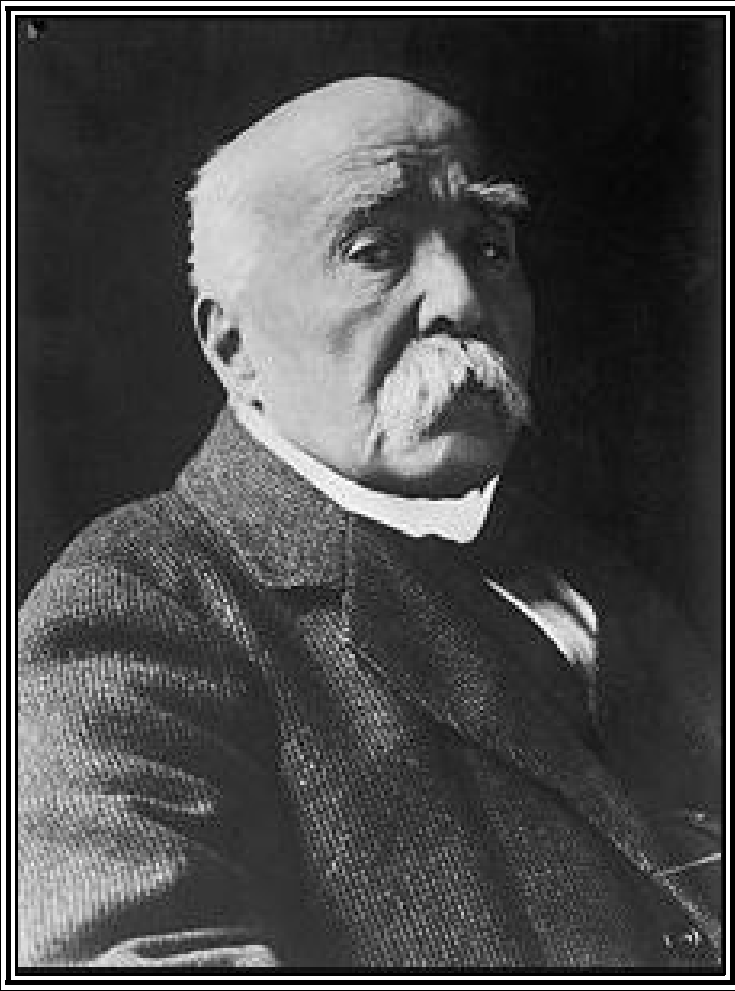
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Le 8 mars, 1918

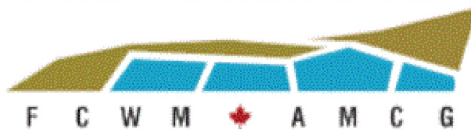
Le Devoir d'Optimisme



Clemenceau et l'importance du moral

« À mesure que la guerre avance, vous voyez se développer la crise morale qui est la terminaison de toutes les guerres. L'épreuve matérielle des forces armées, les brutalités, les violences, les rapines, les meurtres, les massacres en tas, c'est la crise morale à laquelle aboutit l'une ou l'autre partie. Celui qui peut moralement tenir le plus longtemps est le vainqueur. Et le grand peuple d'Orient qui a subi historiquement, pendant des siècles, l'épreuve de la guerre, a formulé cette pensée en un mot: '**Le vainqueur, c'est celui qui peut un quart d'heure de plus que l'adversaire croire qu'il n'est pas vaincu.**' Voilà ma maxime de guerre. Je n'en ai pas d'autre.»

● Michel Winock, Clemenceau (Paris: Perrin, 2007), 431.



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Le 9 mars, 1918

Des trains en pièces détachées



Les trains américains de la Rochelle

Peu après son arrivée en France en 1917, le général américain Pershing a rapidement pris conscience de l'insuffisance des possibilités offertes par les chemins de fer pour l'acheminement de ses troupes et de leur logistique.

Dès le 1^{er} septembre, il a envisagé des travaux d'amélioration des infrastructures ferroviaires et lancé la commande de matériels roulants complémentaires à la puissante industrie de son pays.

À partir de **mars 1918**, 38 000 wagons, leurs locomotives et rails, entièrement préfabriqués aux Etats-Unis et acheminés par bateaux, ont ainsi été assemblés à La Rochelle, avant de transporter hommes et matériels vers les zones d'opérations.

A l'issue du conflit, le Ministère des Travaux Publics (TP) a racheté les matériels pour les redistribuer aux différentes compagnies de chemins de fer, en compensation des dommages de guerre.

Simple mais très robustes, ils ont ainsi effectué un très long service à la SNCF jusque dans les années 80.

Sources et Pour en savoir plus : <https://fr.ulule.com/wagons-centenaire/>

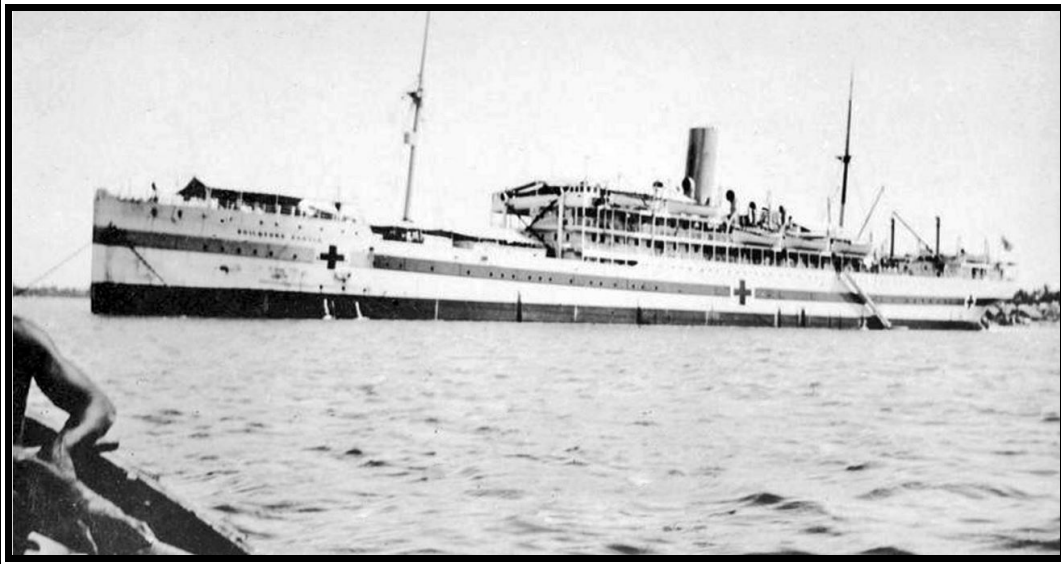


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March 10, 1918 Abomination



HMHS *Guildford Castle* attacked by U-55

In 1917 and 1918 in flagrant violation of accepted international norms, German U-boats attacked an increasing number of Allied hospital ships, claiming that the latter were transporting able-bodied troops.

On 10 March 1918, HMHS *Guildford Castle*, a 7995-ton,

427-bed British Hospital Ship, is attacked by U-55 as she is inbound to Avonmouth, England.

Fortunately the torpedo is spotted in time and the ship manages to turn, the torpedo scraping along the ship's side and failing to explode.

The U-boat commander is Kapitänleutnant Wilhelm Werner, who earlier on January 4th, has torpedoed the fully-lit HMHS *Rewa*, in the Bristol Channel.

The ship sank, but not before all 279 patients aboard were saved, although four crewmen died.

●Douglas Botting: The U-Boats, 61; ●www.forums.clydemaritime.co.uk; ●www.theshipslist.com; Official History of the Great War – Medical Services General History, Vol.1, Appendix C.



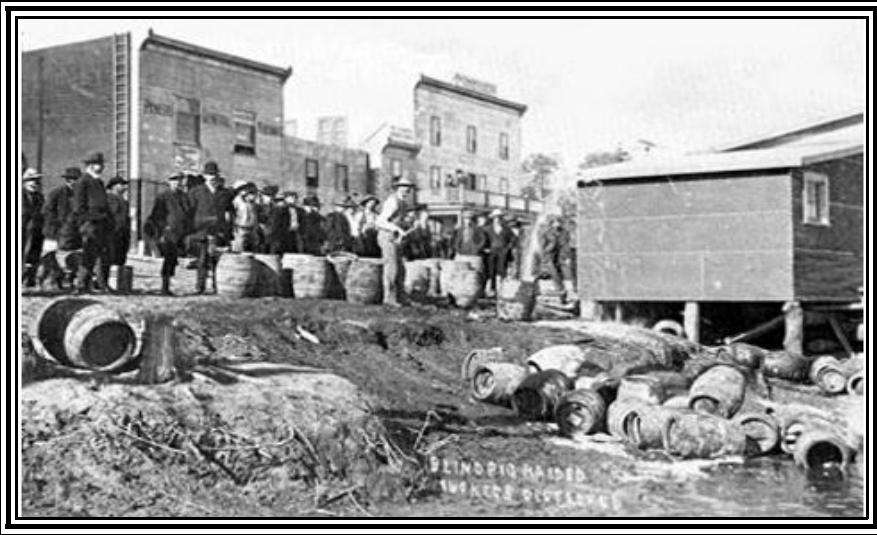
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March 11, 1918

No More Boose in Canada



The Prohibition Laws in Canada

Many “Temperance” activists believed that alcohol, especially hard liquor, was an impediment to economic success, social cohesion and to moral and religious purity.¹

During the 19th century, various temperance movements struggled to gain a foothold, but it was not until the First World War that various laws blocked the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Provinces could stop the sale of alcohol within their own jurisdiction,

and the Federal government could stop its production and importation from sea to sea.

In March 1918, the Federal government passed an Order-in-Council that “prohibited the manufacture, importation, and transportation of alcohol into provinces where purchase was illegal.”² The prohibition law thus became part of the all-encompassing War Measure Act of 1914, frequently modified.

By that time Prohibition was less seen as a moral movement than as a patriotic duty and a social sacrifice, to help win the war. It also became popular because it was widely seen as necessary and natural for the benefit of the soldiers that the country they returned to be a better place.

¹ ●Coombs, Adam James. "Liberty and Community: The Political Ideas of Nineteenth-Century Canadian Temperance Movements", The Graduate History Review, 2011, p 3.

² Hallowell, Gerald A.. Prohibition in Ontario, 1919-1923 (Ottawa: Lowe Printing Service, 1972), p. 75.



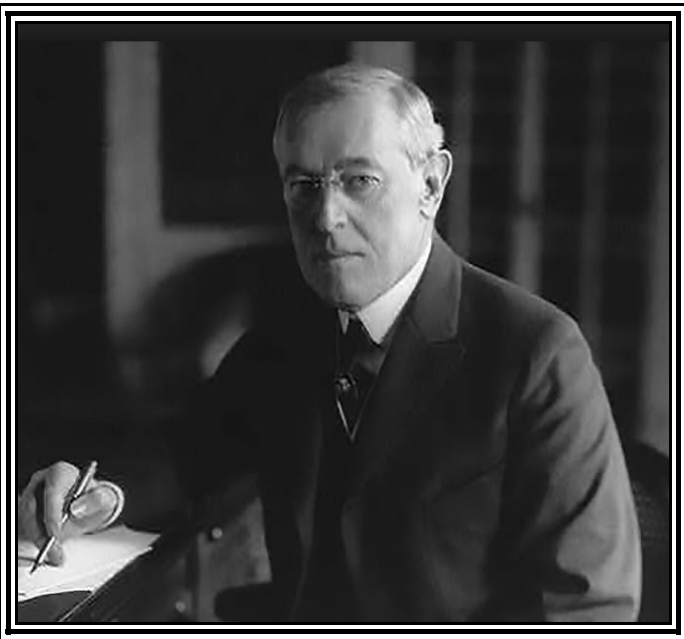
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March 12, 1918

Not as Good as Wilson Thought



Wilson congratulates the Russian Government

On 12 March 1918, President Wilson of the United States sent a letter to the Russian government congratulating them for the Congress of All-Russian Soviets, about to open. He thought that the Bolsheviks represented a post-Tsarist era that would introduce democracy. He also felt that it was important to keep Russia as an ally.

But just a few days later, European allied leaders were informed of the content of the Treaty of Peace of Brest-Litovsk, between the Central Powers and Russia, and Wilson's attitude was criticized.

Great Britain and France could not conceive of the deal made between Germany and Russia as any other than a traitorous repudiation of the earlier

Treaty of Alliance that had been made among them at the start of the war (Treaty of London of 1914), which included that none of the signatories could negotiate a separate armistice.

On 16 March, an allied conference in London drafted a mordant communiqué from the Supreme War Council against Russia, showing a shared refusal to recognize the Treaty of Brest Litovsk and vowing to continue the war without the Russians.

— This diplomatic stance, eventually supported by the United States, set the Russian Reds as enemies.

•Lloyd George, Memoirs, V: p. 2594-7.



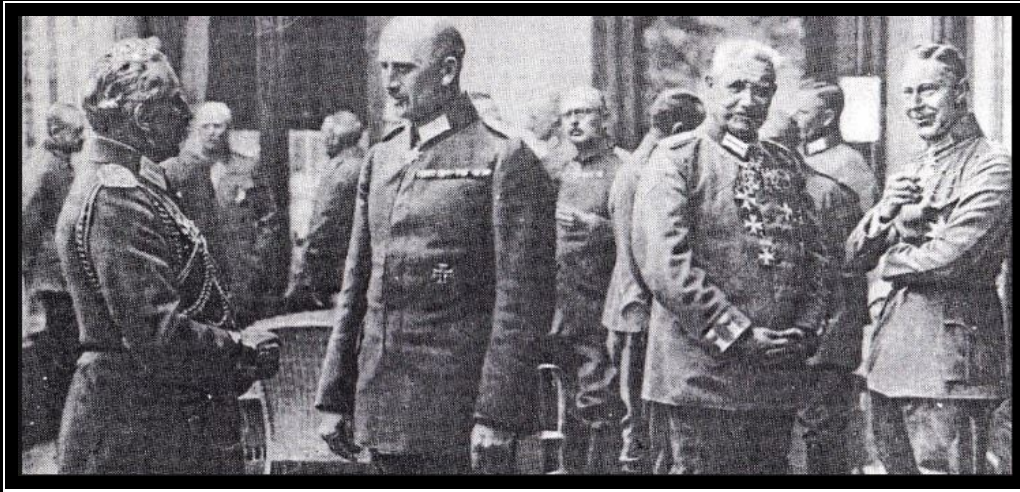
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March 13, 1918

The Hubris of Brest Litovsk



The fate of Poland

Since the beginning of the war, the fate of Poland is a subject of discussions in the German government. Plans to separate Poland between Germany and Austria-Hungary at the end of the war have been tossed back and forth between the two empires, each intent in taking the largest possible share.

With the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, the fate of Poland has just taken a new turn.

In a Crown Council of **13 March 1918**, the High Command of the German forces succeeds in influencing **Wilhelm II** into accepting that Poland whole will come to Germany as a subjugated country, whose role will be to provide the 'bulkward' among the frontier nations to the east that will constitute a defensive corridor against Russia, and a resources-rich protectorate in a German «Mitteleuropa».

The Austrian-Hungarians are being cut out of the deal. The enormous gains realized by the Germans in the recent Treaty of Brest Litovsk convince them that nothing can go wrong from this point.

— The forthcoming operations in the west will simply seal the German supremacy in Europe.

•Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, 526-7.



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Le 14 mars, 1918

Des Soldats pour le Printemps



Des hommes, des hommes, des hommes!

Pendant que les Allemands reçoivent leurs renforts du front est, maintenant que le Traité de Paix de Brest Litovsk a été signé et entériné par le gouvernement bolchévique, le maréchal Haig se voit encore contrarié par son gouvernement.

Il sait qu'il y a toujours en Angleterre plus de 600,000 hommes de

catégorie A, qui ont déjà été entraînés et qui constituent une réserve de renforts qui pourrait remonter les armées britanniques avant les combats du printemps. Avec de tels nombres, il pourrait passer à l'offensive, et peut-être même fournir des troupes pour la réserve stratégique proposée par le Conseil Suprême de Versailles.

Mais le gouvernement de Lloyd George refuse de lui faire parvenir plus de 100,000 hommes, au cours de l'hiver, ce qui ne couvre pas les pertes de l'année précédente.

C'est surtout la bataille infructueuse de Passchendaele, avec ses pertes inutiles, aux yeux du Premier ministre, qui le convainc que d'envoyer des hommes à Haig est de les vouer au gaspillage, alors qu'ils sont si précieux à l'industrie de guerre qui profite à tous les alliés.

● Barnett, The Swordbearers, p. 326.

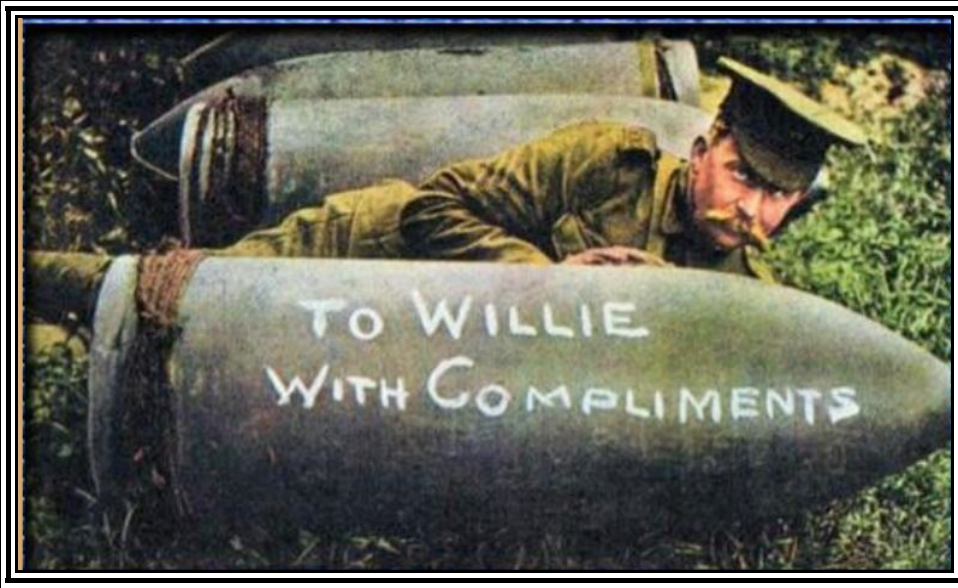


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March 15, 1918
Just in Case



A preemptive strike - British bombardment

On indication of two defectors from the German side, British High Command calls for a massive artillery bombardment along the line, hoping to catch German forces on the move for the expected Spring offensive.

This is reported as being one of the greatest bombardments of the war, causing important casualties, but not impeding the imminent attack.

such, **on 15 March 1918**, that a broadside of massive speculative fire has become possible in all first line divisions.

- Major Kenneth Macksey, MC, *The Shadow of the Ridge* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), p. 139.
- Photo from <https://www.ddoughty.com/ww1-artillery.html>



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March 16, 1918

Taking Them from the Other End



Siberia: Entente Powers Appeal to Washington

On 15 March, the Allied Diplomatic Conference meets in London, bringing together the prime ministers and foreign ministers of the UK, France and Italy to address the consequences of the Treaty of Peace of Brest Litovsk between the Germanic Alliance and Bolshevik Russia.

They conclude that something must be done from the Far East to curtail further German inroads into Russian territory.

The conference directs British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to send a letter to the US government

outlining the risks and the urgency of naval and military intervention in Siberia, the easiest point of access to Russia. Japan (an ally) would be crucial to an effort in Vladivostok.

The US vacillates on this point; Wilson is not immediately in favour.

Balfour's letter of the **16 March 1918** conveys the Entente's collective view that Japan's forces are essential, but that without active US support, it would be useless to approach Japan.

●David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, Vol. VI, Chap 83: «Aftermath in Russia», p. 3152-97, esp. p. 3175.

●<http://blogs.umb.edu/buildingtheworld/railways/trans-siberian-railway-russia/>



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March 17, 1918

Farm Enlistment Week in Canada



Fight or Farm

Canada not only supplies men to meet Britain's military needs, but also provides massive food support. These two crucial needs are the cause of conflicts between urban and rural citizens, especially since the introduction of the Military Service Act.

A large percentage of farmers feel strongly

that they are supporting the war effort through the production of food to ship overseas.

But as the war progresses with no end in sight, farmers who have been previously exempted, are now conscripted to serve at the front. This causes problems during the seeding/planting and harvest seasons. To overcome the shortage of farm labour, the Food Commissioner and its 235 local Farm Help Committees, declare the week of **17 March 1918** as **Farm Enlistment Week** so that women and men can register to provide help on local farms. The Canada Food Board also fosters a campaign called "Soldiers of the Soil" appealing to boys aged 15 to 19 to volunteer their summers on farms desperately short of labour.

Soldiers on leave are encouraged to work on farms and all citizens are asked to consume less food so that more can be sent overseas.

- Mourad Djebabla-Brun, Combattre avec les vivres, Septentrion, Québec, 2015.
- Photo from Pritchard Farms, <https://prichardfarms.com/on-farmerettes/>



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Le 18 mars, 1918

Lettonie et Courlande



L'Allemagne saisit la Courlande

Le vieux duché de Courlande est devenu au XIXe siècle une possession du Tsar de Russie.

Avec la Révolution russe d'Octobre et le traité de Brest Litovsk, la Courlande est maintenant en position pour demander son indépendance de la Russie, d'autant plus que l'Allemagne offre un Protectorat qui plaît à ses élites germaniques baltiques.

Le 19 mars 1918, la Courlande, comme tous les états frontaliers de la Russie, tombe sous la protection

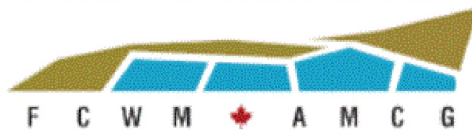
allemande.

Elle deviendra, non moins que les autres, une source de ressources minérales et alimentaires pour les efforts de guerre de l'Alliance Centrale.

Cette annexion est d'autant plus intéressante pour la Couronne allemande que l'Empereur de l'Empire allemand, Guillaume II, est aussi Roi de Prusse, et que la Courlande, co-frontalière, sera annexée à la Prusse au sein de l'empire.

— La Couronne allemande des Hohenzollern sera encore, pour quelques brefs jours, au faite de son succès.

•Fischer, Germany's aims in the First World War, p. 598-607.



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Le 19 mars, 1918

Churchill s'intéresse aux Chars



Winston Churchill en France

Toujours pour pousser son nez partout où il peut apprendre quelque chose de neuf, Winston Churchill profite d'une conférence qu'il tient, en tant que Ministre des Munitions, à Montreuil, en France, pour visiter le Quartier-général du Maréchal Haig, où il se fait expliquer, carte à l'appui, les dispositions allemandes telles qu'elles sont connues par le Renseignement militaire.

Il apprend ainsi que 110 divisions allemandes ont été reconnues en face des lignes des Britanniques, qui en possèdent eux-mêmes 57. Quarante de ces divisions allemandes font face à la Cinquième Armée

britannique. Quarante-cinq divisions allemandes s'alignent devant les Français, qui occupent pourtant les deux-tiers de la ligne de front en France. Quatre divisions ennemies font face aux neuf divisions américaines à Saint-Mihiel.

Il est évident qu'une attaque massive va se produire dans les prochains jours. Le Renseignement rapporte aussi que les Allemands ont maintenant produit des chars d'assaut, ce qui inquiète. Lorsqu'il visite la 9e Division (son ancienne division commandée par son ami, le général Tudor), il apprend que des champs de mines antichars ont été construits avec des obus amorcés enfouis.

— Le moment est reconnu par tous comme le calme avant la tempête; une tempête énorme.

●Winston Churchill, The World Crisis, 1911-1918, Vol. III (Partie 2), p. 409-410.



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March 20, 1918

Forward Thinking with Big Divisions



A Major Change to Supporting Arms

Lieutenant General Arthur Currie's most outstanding talents were probably as an organizer.

After having gained experience as a field brigade and division commander, his accession to the post of Corps Commander highlighted his abilities in shaping organizations for their purpose.

In the Spring of 1918, it is remarkable that Currie is distancing himself from the trends in other Corps.

Currie is sending Corps assets forward to the divisions so as to be more intimately

integrated into the first lines.

In particular, machine-guns battalions and field engineer brigades are now increased and sent forward so as to accompany his smooth-working 12-infantry-battalion divisions.

For more information, see ●David W. Love, [A Nation in Making: The Organization and Administration of the Canadian Military during the First World War](#), 2 Vols, (Service Publications, 2012).



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March 21st, 1918

A Storm of Troopers



Operation Michael Begins

At 0440 hours on **March 21st 1918** a massive German bombardment of HE and gas shells by over 10,000 guns and mortars fell upon the defences of the British Third (Byng) and Fifth (Gough) Armies across a 50-mile front, achieving overwhelming tactical and strategic surprise.

Targets far to the rear were hit and communications, artillery emplacements and frontline trenches destroyed. At 0940, behind a creeping barrage and hidden by thick fog, a compact mass of 76 German divisions

from Seventeenth, Second and Eighteenth Armies, spearheaded by Stormtroopers, smashed into British frontline defences. Within hours, to the south, whole units were destroyed or surrendered (21,000 men taken prisoner) and, though some redoubts held out, a general retreat began among many Fifth Army and some Third Army units. To the north the German attack was held up by Third Army defences and desperate fighting in the Cambrai Salient.

— Along a 19-mile front the whole British forward position was lost to a depth of 4½ miles.

●Barrie Pitt, 1918 The Last Act, 75-83; ●Martin Middlebrook, The Kaiser's Battle; ●Trevor Wilson, The Myriad Faces of War, 554-564; ●John Keegan: History of the First World War, 392-401; ●Tim Cook: Shock Troops, 388-394; ●Correlli Barnett: The Swordbearers, 299-336; ●Jeffery Williams, Byng of Vimy, 216-219.



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March 22nd, 1918

Second Day Goes to the *Sturmabteilung*



Operation Michael Day 2

The German offensive continued early on **22 March 1918**. During the night Fifth Army had retreated to the thinly-held line of the Crozat Canal and the Somme. Although the Germans maintained their momentum, the second day was not so smashingly successful as the attack lacked surprise and artillery was at a disadvantage

because of thick fog.

Von Below's Seventeenth Army ran into stiff resistance from Byng's Third Army reserve battalions in well-entrenched positions in the rear of the Battle Zone, and once the fog lifted the Germans suffered heavy casualties. However, the weight of German attacks led to withdrawal from the Cambrai Salient.

To the south Gough's Fifth Army was faced with disaster and by noon the German Second Army was across the Crozat Canal and British troops found either unmanned or non-existent defences even in the Battle Zone as they retreated. Many posts were held with great gallantry but by dusk on March 22nd the entire Battle Zone of Fifth Army had been lost.

– Still, the *Sturmabteilung* were far short of their objectives.

●Barrie Pitt, 1918 The Last Act, 85-93; ●Correlli Barnett, The Swordbearers, 341-344; ●Jeffery Williams, Byng of Vimy, 219-221; ●Martin Middlebrook, The Kaiser's Battle, 344.



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Le 23 mars, 1918

Une vague à l'Emporte-Pièce

Une vague à l'emporte-pièce

Le 23 mars 1918 marque la troisième journée de la vague à l'emporte-pièce de la grande offensive allemande «MICHEL», dirigée contre le secteur entre Arras et Saint-Quentin, en Picardie.

La Cinquième Armée britannique, la plus au sud, au joint avec le Groupe d'armées français, est la plus éprouvée. La Troisième Armée britannique, voisine du nord, est aussi bousculée par les offensives mouvantes des Allemands, qui savent profiter de tous les points faibles sans s'attarder au points forts.

La situation est tellement critique, en cette troisième journée de combats dynamiques de la part de 32 divisions allemandes, qu'une crainte de séparation définitive entre les armées britanniques et françaises force les commandants en chef à réclamer l'un de l'autre des réserves. Pétain offre, à contrecœur, neuf divisions à Haig, qui le rassurent pour un jour.

Il devient clair que le commandement commun s'impose. Il faut une coordination centrale pour réagir avec une stratégie plus cohérente.

— Mais il est déjà tard. Paris est menacée.



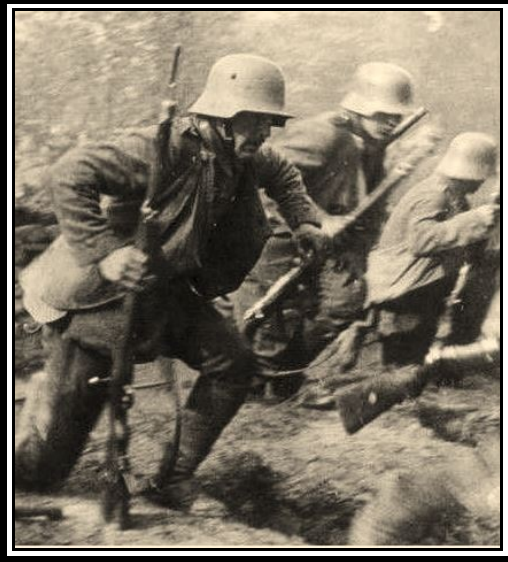
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March 24, 1918

A Fourth Day of Retreat



Operation Michael, Day 4: The Crisis of the Battle

24 March 1918 is one of the worst days for the Allies. The danger grows of the separation of the British and French armies and the displacement of the whole British line towards the Channel ports.

Retreat and disorder remain the lot of Gough's Fifth Army. Help is on the way from the French, but they are caught up in the general retreat. On this front, the Germans achieve a breach forty miles wide.

To the north, von Below's Seventeenth Army slogs slowly forward against unbroken resistance from Byng's Third Army, capturing Bapaume.

Cracks begin to appear in Allied solidarity. But German momentum is already running down because of fatigue and serious supply problems.

Their artillery cannot be brought forward fast enough to support infantry attacks because of the difficulties of the Somme terrain.

Also, as they overrun British lines, German troops fall to looting food and supplies, seriously disrupting their own offensive.

— Their attacks also become more costly, hampered by the British blanketing of the front with gas.

●Correlli Barnett, The Swordbearers, 345-351; ● Trevor Wilson, The Myriad Faces of War, 562-3; ●John Keegan, The First World War, 402; ●Tim Cook, Shock Troops, 391.



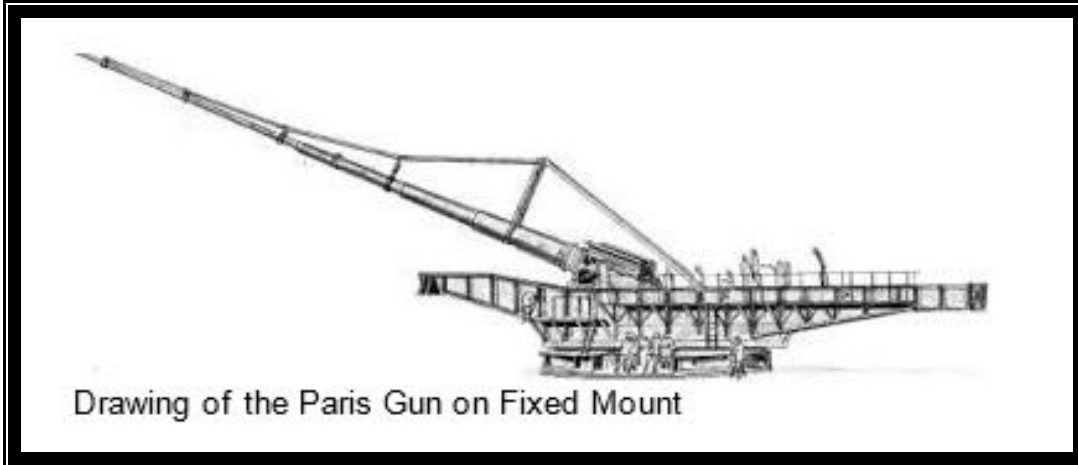
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●March 25, 1918

A Long Shot at the City of Light



Drawing of the Paris Gun on Fixed Mount

The Paris Guns

With the Spring of 1918, long-range German cannons begin a bombardment of Paris which will end only in August, and eventually kill 256 people and wound over 600.

The guns - never more than three - will fire nearly 380 shells weighing 120 kg over a range of 130 km.

The ***Kaiser Wilhelmgeschütze*** is the largest gun used in World War 1. It was built by Krupp using de-commissioned 380 mm naval guns, into which a tube was inserted reducing the bore of the 34 m long barrel to 210 mm. The barrel is mounted on a heavy concrete emplacement. Seven barrels were manufactured. After 65 shots, barrels will be removed and bored out to 240mm, forcing the use of a new size of ammunition.

The guns are not especially accurate; their main effect is to attack morale in the city, which will be partially achieved in the first few days. They will be destroyed by the retreating Germans.

Further information: ●Bull, G.V., and C.H. Murphy, *Paris Kanonen – The Paris Guns (Wilhelmgeschütze) and Project HARP: The Application of Major Calibre Guns to Atmospheric and Space Research* (Herford und Bonn: Verlag E.S. Mittler & Sons GmbH, 1988). ●Wikipedia, «Paris Gun».



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March 26, 1918

Deus Ex Paris Machina



The Hour has found the Man

On 26 March 1918, after five days of moving battle, Fifth British Army is in complete retreat and Third British Army is trying to plug the gap between British and French armies.

General Haig is calling for help but Général Pétain says he must defend Paris. The moment is crucial. Coordination must happen for any plan to work.

Two meetings happen that stand out as high points of the war.

Haig meets his army commanders to discuss the situation. He then calls London.

Secretary of War Milner goes to Paris, picks up French President Clemenceau and

Foch, and they go to meet Haig in Doullens.

Then and there, the two government agree that Foch become, from this point, the overall 'coordinator' of the battle. They issue the following joint order:

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ « **General Foch is appointed by the British and French Governments to co-ordinate the action of the Allied Armies on the Western Front. To this end he will come to an understanding with the two generals-in-chief, who are requested to furnish him with all necessary information.**»

●Hunter, FOCH, 157; Pitt, 1918, 118.



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Le 27 mars, 1918

Réussite postale



L'Avion touche en Afrique

Lors de la Première Guerre mondiale, **Pierre-Georges Latécoère** est mobilisé comme artilleur durant quatre mois, mais il est réformé à cause de sa vue déficiente.

Rendu à la vie civile, il participe à l'effort de guerre et investit à Toulouse dans deux usines : l'une fabriquant des obus, l'autre des cellules d'avion à partir de 1916.

Il est le premier à avoir fait de Toulouse un site aéronautique. En 1918, près de 800 appareils seront livrés à l'armée

française, avec une cadence de six appareils par jour à partir du 5 mai 1918.

En mars 1918, le général Hubert Lyautey accepte d'accorder à Pierre Latécoère une convention postale pour l'Afrique, mais demande, à titre de test, de se faire livrer son courrier par avion.

Deux avions «Salmson » décollent alors de Toulouse, direction le Maroc, mais ces deux appareils sont rapidement hors d'état de poursuivre leur route. Nouveau décollage de Toulouse le 8 mars. Cette fois, l'avion parvient à rallier Casablanca dès le 9 mars.

— Lyautey signe finalement la convention postale de Latécoère le **30 mars 1918**.

Sources : <http://dictionnaire.sensagent.leparisien.fr/1918%20en%20aeronautique/fr-fr/>

Pour en savoir plus : <https://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2017/09/15/2645892-pierre-georges-latecoere-pionnier-de-l-aeronautique.html>



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March 28, 1918

A Flying Circus



Canadians despatched to cover retreating Fifth Army

The British Fifth Army is in full retreat after having been hit hard by the assaults of the German Second and Eighteenth Armies.

The Canadian Corps, in First Army, to the north, is called upon to send its 1st Brigade of Motor Machine Gun in great haste.

This unique unit, built by private concerns and sent from Ottawa at the start of the war, rushes to Villers-Bretonneux, 10 miles to the east of Amiens, and to Cléry, on the Péronne-Albert road (of Somme memory). Its forty Vickers machine-guns mounted in five batteries of four armoured cars succeed in providing mobile fire to

protect retreating infantry.

«The assistance given by the Motor Machine Gun Brigade to General Gough's exhausted and disorganized divisions had been far out of proportion to the size of such a comparatively small unit. Its officers and men had been trained to fight on their own initiative - training which bore good results when orders could not reach them and headquarters of divisions and infantry brigades, continually on the move, could not be found.»¹

¹Nicholson, The Canadian Expeditionary Force, p. 372.



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March 28, 1918 Easter in Ireland and Québec



Anti-Conscription Easters

In 1918, Easter falls on Sunday, March 31st. In Ireland, this is the second anniversary of the famous Easter riots of 1916, when the southern counties Irish refused to join forces with the British in the War, and armed confrontations in Dublin led to civil war.

The British government has now just taken the stand

that it will not enforce Conscription in Ireland despite the fact that the last classes of draftees are now being called up throughout Great Britain following the news from France. The Lloyd George coalition has decided that enforcing compulsory service in the Catholic counties of Ireland would require more troops than could be drafted.

It is also Easter in French Canada and the Catholics there are also against compulsory service. Starting on Good Friday, riots take place in Québec City where troops have to be dispatched by the thousands from Ontario (mostly draftees themselves) to face rampaging mobs intent on destroying all government records pertaining to compulsory service, and seizing firearms from gunshops.

— Perhaps the Borden Government will also think that enforcement will be counter-productive...

For more information: ●Granatstein, *Broken Promises*; ●E.H. Armstrong, *Le Québec et la Crise de la Conscription*; ●Simon Jolivet, «La Presse nationaliste québécoise et la question irlandaise, 1914-1918», dans Jean Lamarre et Magali Deleuze (dir.), *L'envers de la médaille: guerres, témoignages et représentations – Actes du 12e Colloque d'histoire militaire* (Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007).



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March 30, 1918

Saturday Riots

Form 4125, replacing Form 24-7-16.

<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="font-size: small;">CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Day Message</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Night Message</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Night Letter</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Special Message</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Special Telegram</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Special Cable</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Special Radiogram</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Special Telegram</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Special Cable</td></tr> <tr><td style="font-size: x-small;">Special Radiogram</td></tr> </table>	CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	Day Message	Night Message	Night Letter	Special Message	Special Telegram	Special Cable	Special Radiogram	Special Telegram	Special Cable	Special Radiogram	<h1 style="margin: 0;">CANADIAN NATIONAL</h1> <h1 style="margin: 0;">TELEGRAPHS</h1>	<p style="text-align: center;">Exclusive Connection with WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH CO.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cable Service to all the World Money Transferred by Telegraph</p>
CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED													
Day Message													
Night Message													
Night Letter													
Special Message													
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RECEIVERS NO.													
CNT 2-981													
TIME FILED													
30 MAR 1918													
OFFICE													
PRESS GALLERY QUEENS PARK TORONTO													
<p>Send the following message, subject to the limit on both lines, which we hereby agree to</p> <p>QUEBEC CITY 30 MAR 1918</p> <p>ANTI CONSCRIPTION RIOTS IN QUEBEC CITY GETS OUT OF HAND STOP TEN THOUSAND IN STREETS CAUSE DAMAGE STOP BORDEN MEETS WITH MIN OF JUST AND CGE STOP PROCLAIMS WAR MEASURES ACT GIVING FED GOVT RESP FOR ORDER STOP BGEN LANDRY DEPLOYS 700 TROOPS FOR VITAL POINT PROT INCL 250 CENTRAL ONT REGT 240 MD-5 COMPOSITE BN 100 ROYAL CDN GARRISON ARTILLERY 50 1ST DEPOT BN 3RD QUEBEC REGT STOP LANDRY CALLS FOR 1000 ADD TROOPS STOP BORDEN AGREES TO 1000 FROM ONT AND 1000 FROM WEST CANADA STOP 700 LEAVE TOR ON THIS DAY FOR QUEBEC STOP BGEN FRANCOIS-LOUIS LESSARD INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR EASTERN CANADA ORDERED FROM HALIFAX TO TAKE CHARGE ON THE STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION OF THE PROTECTION OF GOVT ASSETS IN QUEBEC STOP NATIONALIST EXTREMISTE LEADERS TANCREDE MARTEL AND ELIE LALUMIERE ARRESTED STOP REPORT BY LT-COL MACHIN SENT FROM OTTAWA CALLS FOR MORE TROOPS INCL HALF MOUNTED MEN STOP FROM OFFICE QUEBEC TELEGRAPH. 7.30PM FULL STOP.</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">NOT ORIGINAL</p>													



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March 31st, 1918

The Flower of Canadian Chivalry



Heroic charge of the Flowerdew Squadron (LdSH)

By March 30th 1918 the German assault is within 12 miles of the city of Amiens. The Canadian Cavalry Brigade is ordered to support British infantry units in seizing the strategically important Moreuil Wood, which the Germans occupy. The lead squadron of the Royal Canadian Dragoons runs into heavy fire and is forced to attack on foot.

C Squadron of Lord Strathcona's Horse (LdSH), under Lieutenant Gordon Flowerdew, rides around the northeastern corner of the wood to seal off the enemy. Seeing German troops caught in the open some 300 metres away Flowerdew leads his 75 men at full gallop in a charge into concentrated fire that decimates his force. Twenty-four men are killed and almost all are wounded, with fifteen who die later.

This quick decision stabilizes the front and purchases precious time for British forces to establish a new defensive line to the rear. Flowerdew dies of his wounds on this day (**31 March 1918**) and is awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.

— Alfred Munning's painting 'Charge of Flowerdew's Squadron' commemorates this gallant Canadian action.

•Tim Cook, *Shock Troops*, 394; •Arthur Bishop, *Our Bravest and Our Best*, 84-86; •Captain J.R. Grodzinski, *The Battle of Moreuil Wood*; •Alfred Munning, «Charge of Flowerdew Squadron' shown partially here.



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